

Bodie? I don't do it to be feminine, I do it to be more masculine. And it's exciting, feeling that silk on me, it's so delicate and fine, and I'm so hard and muscular." The averted face was getting to him, this display of outrage and horrified disbelief. "Shock you, does it? D'you want to be really shocked, Bodie? Well, I'll tell you something to scare you shitless. I think about you sometimes, when I'm standing there in my things. I think about you and I fuck my hand, and I pretend it's your arse I'm fucking."

He came right up behind Bodie, until Bodie could smell his after-shave and the underlying musk that told him what Doyle must have been doing prior to Bodie's arrival.

"I do it for a special treat, Bodie, when I want to feel really sexy, when I want to do something extra good for myself. Look at me, Bodie, you bastard!" He grabbed Bodie's arm, forcing him round, shaking him. "Look at me, Bodie. Don't you hide from me. Don't you do this to us, you stupid prick. Why does it make a difference, eh, tell me that. D'you think last night was the first time I've ever done it? D'you think I'm a different man from the one you've known all this time? Bodie, I don't even remember when I started doing this, I just know that I've always done it. I've always liked it. Used to steal my big sister's knickers and wear them to school under my uniform, and it was best of all when we did sports, running around being all tough and playing football or rugby, with my panties rubbing me all the time. Oh, Bodie," and the anger was like him, utterly spent. "Can't you try to understand? It doesn't change who I am, it shouldn't change what we've got."

Bodie wouldn't look at him, white around the mouth, body rigid.

"Bodie, don't you dare do this to us."

Bodie wrenched himself free, finally looking at Doyle. "What the fuck do you expect from me, Ray? What can you expect?"

Then he was gone again, whirlwind leaving, hollowness setting up home in Doyle's belly. Going upstairs, he fingered his lovely things, but even they were unwelcome, a symbol of all the trouble gone before, of all the trouble yet to come. He thought of all the things he could do with what was left of the night, then tried to think of a single thing he actually wanted to do. Alone and lonely, all he did was turn the lights

out and go to bed, pulling the blankets up over his head, the way he had when he was only a boy, caught in the middle of his parents' divorce.

He had intended to go straight home, but he couldn't, everything Doyle had said to him revolving around his head like a deviant carousel. For hours he drove, returning to the solitude of his flat only when he was so tired that he began to make mistakes in his driving. In his own home, he undressed, resolutely refusing to think about what Doyle had said. Not another second would he devote to it, brushing his teeth, washing, going to the bathroom, climbing into his bed with jaw clenched and muscles jumping with tension. He wasn't going to think about it any more. Not at all. Not for a second.

But Ray had said he thought about him sometimes, when he was doing that. Ray, thinking about him, wanking. His mate, a poof. No, he thought, be fair. Bisexual. Someone who could screw anything that moved.

He'd been like that, once. He rolled over, pulling the blankets up over his ears, screwing his eyes tightly shut as if that would blot out what his imagination was showing him. He wasn't going to think about that. He'd given all that up when he'd got back to civilisation and women, didn't do it any more, didn't need it any more, didn't want it any more.

But Ray did. A lot, if the pain in those green eyes had been anything to go by. Christ, how long had Ray wanted him? And why had he never said anything?

But he had, his memory supplied with inconvenient honesty. The night Bodie's girlfriend had stood him up and Doyle had suggested that as his girl had hinted more than once that she'd like a three-way with him and Bodie, then why didn't they go ahead and do it? He remembered his own reaction: rebuttal, vicious and beyond arguing, the instinctive reaction to something that scared him. He had wanted men before, when he was at school and first at sea. And when he was in Africa, of course. But it was one thing to want men when there were no women around; it was something else entirely to be afraid of a threesome because you just might be more interested in the other bloke than the girl.

He rolled over again, onto his back this time, then onto his front, punching his pillow in lieu

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